



MEDIA RELATIONS

MEDIA ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Reporters are people, too. They have their job and you have yours. Working relationships can be mutually beneficial. You need them, but they need you as well—to provide stories, content, background information, and spokespeople for your issue.

- Remember that media cover *stories*, not issues. Therefore, it is your responsibility to package the information that you give to media gatekeepers in a way that puts a human face on the issue. Maintain a personal angle in the stories you try to sell.
- Take the time to introduce yourself, your organization, and your cause to members of your local media. Let them know that you are an expert on your issue and can be a continuing resource for them. Build the mutual trust and respect that are essential to all successful relationships. Always tell the truth and never mislead a reporter.
- Keep track of the reporters who report on your issues in your community. Learn all you can about who makes the decisions in each media outlet and how (see "Identifying Media Opportunities"). Newspapers have reporters, but they also have section editors, city editors, national editors, feature editors, managing editors, and publishers. TV stations have assignment editors and executive producers. If you have a professional relationship with a member of the media, you can sound out ideas for news conferences or other media events to determine if they are newsworthy for coverage.

